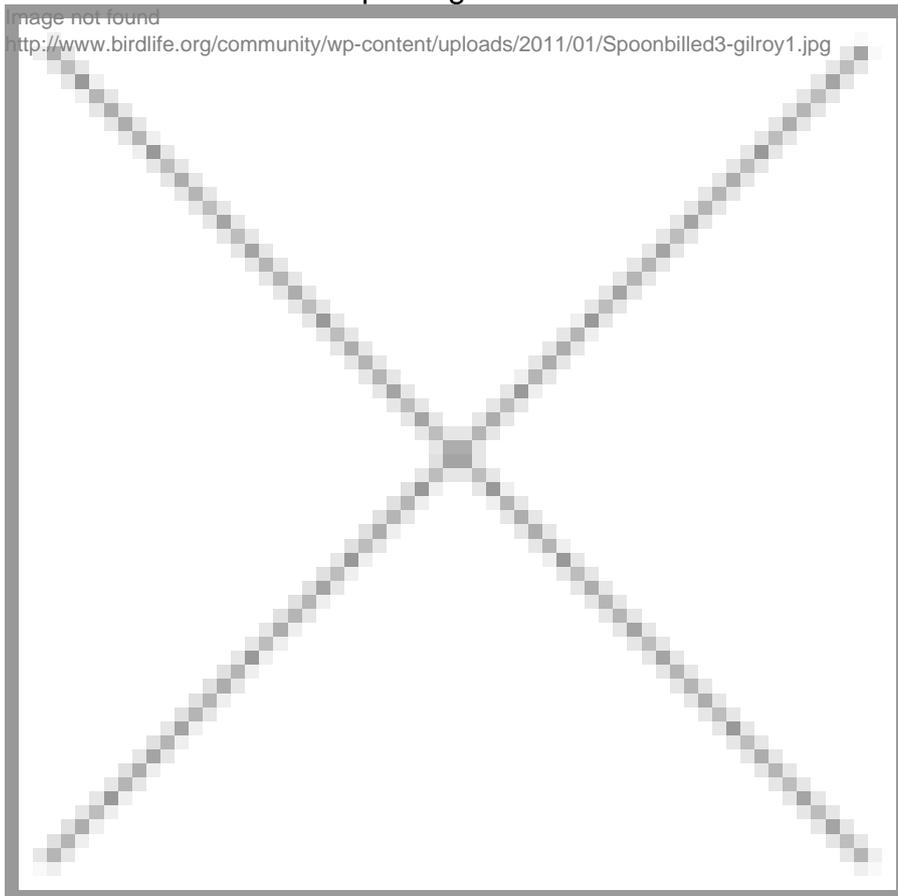


Spoon-billed Sandpiper

Title

Spoon-billed Sandpiper is one of the world's strangest-looking birds and certainly the weirdest wader. It is a small bird (14-16cm) with as its name suggests, a spoon-shaped bill. The species is listed as Critically Endangered by BirdLife International because it has an extremely small population, which is getting smaller. This means that it is at real risk from extinction in the next few years.

Its numbers have declined dramatically over the last three decades due to problems throughout its range. Disturbance on its arctic breeding grounds, possibly made worse from climate change and the loss of important mud flats to feed on during its migration have all contributed to its precipitous current status. In recent years, hunting on its non-breeding grounds have also been shown to be impacting on this beautiful bird.



A breeding plumaged Spoon-billed Sandpiper in the Russian arctic (James Gilroy)

The reason for the evolution of this bill is not entirely clear, although the following video clip on non-breeding grounds in Thailand show individuals pushing their bills through mud and sand in a very different way to other wading birds.

This species only breeds in north-eastern Russia. It migrates down the western Pacific coast through Russia, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, mainland China, Hong Kong and Chinese Taiwan, to its main wintering grounds in Bangladesh and Myanmar.

Wintering birds have also been recorded from India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines, in the Fujian province of China, Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore. It occurs regularly at only a few sites within this wintering range, with important countries including Bangladesh, Myanmar and Thailand.



Spoon-billed Sandpiper distribution

The species is benefiting from an action plan coordinated by BirdLife under the auspices of the United Nations Convention on Migratory Species. This will be vital in coordinating National and International conservation charities to rally to this charismatic bird.

You can help us in this work by making a contribution and donating [here](#)